

TO: Local Education Agency Superintendents

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools 

DATE: February 13, 2025

SUBJECT: Immigration Enforcement in Schools – Responding to Inquiries from Immigration Law Enforcement Officers

Immigration Enforcement in Schools – Standing Weekly Item

While the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is unaware of any current plans to conduct immigration enforcement activities within school buildings, we acknowledge the prospect of officers within the school buildings is provoking anxiety and uncertainty for both school staff and families. Local superintendents and legal counsel should proactively establish response protocols to ensure all members of the school community understand how to react if law enforcement comes to a school. To assist local education agencies (LEAs) in crafting protocols, this week’s update outlines recommendations¹ for LEA leadership in creating local protocols for school staff interacting with law enforcement officers and federal immigration officials, while also maintaining safe and supportive learning environments for all students.

What should LEAs include in the development of local protocols addressing immigration law enforcement requests for school building access?

1. Every LEA should establish protocols and procedures that govern how school staff will interact with federal immigration and law enforcement requests for access to school buildings and/or records.
2. MSDE recommends that the LEA designate a point of contact in central office leadership, as well as legal counsel, to manage communications associated with the protocol. Be sure to designate back-up support when leads are unavailable.
3. Each school should have a designated individual, such as the school principal or designee, who is assigned to handle all contact with immigration law enforcement at the school level, including implementation of protocols for contacting central office leadership and legal counsel.
4. Each school should have a designated area where the school administrator or designee can meet with the officer. Ideally this space will minimize student, staff, and family exposure to law enforcement, mitigating unnecessary panic and confusion.

¹ This memorandum serves as guidance and is not intended as legal advice. LEAs should consult with local counsel to ensure local policies are in alignment with federal and State law.

5. If an officer comes to the building, the administrator should ask for the officer's name, identification, and supervisor's name and number. Record the officer's badge number, and ask which law enforcement agency the officer represents, such as the local police or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Determine the purpose of the visit.
6. If the officer has a warrant, the administrator should ask to see the warrant and make a copy of it.
7. The administrator should then contact the designated LEA leadership and legal counsel immediately for guidance. The administrator should inform the officer that s/he needs to consult with LEA counsel. Share all information, requests, and documents obtained from the officer with counsel.
8. The officer should not enter a space that is not open to the public, unless the officer has a warrant signed by a judge. If the officer requests access to a non-public space (e.g., classroom), the administrator should request to speak with counsel first. If the officer orders the administrator to open the non-public space without consulting LEA counsel, the administrator should comply but inform the officer they are entering without consent, then immediately contact LEA counsel.
9. While the administrator should remain courteous, they should avoid sharing any information, and limit continued interaction with the officer until the LEA leadership or legal counsel provides further instructions.
10. Should there be an encounter on school grounds or an area nearby, the LEA should designate where students will be directed, making all attempts to limit the students' exposure to enforcement action.
11. Following these protocols, it is unlikely that officials will directly approach individual classrooms. However, if an individual teacher or staff member is approached by an officer, the officer should be redirected to the front office to meet with the school's administrator.
12. LEA protocols should be disseminated to all staff in the school building to ensure consistent adherence to the protocol. All staff members should understand who will meet with officials, where officials should be directed for assistance, and who will contact the central office leadership and legal counsel in a case where law enforcement arrives at the building or otherwise contacts the school.

What if law enforcement officers insist on immediate access to students or information?

School staff should not argue or debate with law enforcement officials. If the officer presents a judicial warrant for documents, the administrator should ask to speak with counsel before disclosing anything.

Should school staff notify parents, guardians, or students that law enforcement agents inquired about them or their children at school?

Yes. School staff should notify the parents or guardians of the student(s) involved, as well as students who are unaccompanied youth, right away, in their preferred language. The only exception would be if the local superintendent, counsel, or designated LEA administrator determines that there is a valid court order in place that prohibits sharing this information with the parent or guardian. The school administrator should consult with LEA leadership and counsel.

What should school staff do if a student is removed by an Immigration Enforcement Action official?

School staff should request information from the officer regarding where the student is being taken, then notify the parent/guardian and the superintendent or designated LEA administrator immediately. School administrators should appoint one individual to handle this contact to avoid spreading misinformation or inadvertently causing unnecessary alarm.

What should school staff do if law enforcement calls the school for records?

School staff must comply with the privacy requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”). School staff should not respond to phone inquiries regarding students. LEAs should designate a central office point of contact to whom law enforcement can be directed when requesting records. This individual will be responsible for working with legal counsel to ensure that there is a legitimate basis under FERPA or other State and federal law to disclose requested records.

How should LEA leadership share the LEA’s law enforcement protocols?

LEA leaders should communicate protocols and strategies to all staff members clearly, so the entire school community feels equipped to address law enforcement inquiries appropriately. Protocols should be made public, such as being posted on the LEA website, to reassure families and students.

Sample LEA Policies

[Charles County Public Schools Immigration Supports](#)

[Montgomery County Public Schools Immigration Supports for Students and Families](#) and [What Happens If Immigration Law Enforcement Officers Come to a School](#)

[Prince George’s County Public Schools Immigration Resources](#)

Additional Information

MSDE will continue to provide updated information for the public about [Immigration Enforcement Actions at Schools](#) on its website.

Given the complex nature of immigration enforcement in schools, LEAs should consult with their legal counsel to ensure local procedures and communications are consistent with State and federal law.

Questions about immigration enforcement in schools may be directed to Dr. Teresa Timmons-Parrott, Director of Multilingual Education and World Languages, at teresa.timmons-parrott@maryland.gov.